

California's Stem Cell Agency's New Strategic Plan Outlines Vision for the Future

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San Francisco, CA – Creative partnerships to move promising stem cell therapies into clinical trials; a pioneering new kind of clinic to help deliver those therapies to patients; and a renewed commitment to delivering health and economic benefits to California – those are some of the key elements in the new Strategic Plan just published by California's stem cell agency – the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

"This plan is the blueprint that will help guide us through the next phase of our work," says Ellen Feigal, MD, Senior Vice President for Research and Development at the stem cell agency. "The science surrounding stem cell research is rapidly evolving and our Strategic Plan will help us respond to those changes and use our resources in the most effective way to achieve our goals."

The plan – which was developed in close consultation with CIRM Board members, researchers, industry experts, patient advocates and other key stakeholders – contains a number of key provisions:

- Fund at least 10 therapies in early phase clinical trials that impact at least five diseases
- Attract the best scientists in the world to join us in creating discoveries that will shape biology and medicine for the future
- Create partnerships with industry, and leverage our dollars to speed up the development of therapies to be tested in people
- Create specialized stem cell clinics in California that can carry out clinical trials and deliver new therapies to patients
- Fund Centers of Excellence in stem cell genetics to take advantage of rapid developments in genetics and health
- Develop a strong support network with the Californian patient advocate community to keep them informed about clinical trials and the scientific progress being made
- Work closely with state and local governments to attract new research and biotech companies to California
- Promote our Bridges Training and Creativity programs to offer opportunities to students representing the diversity of California's population who are hoping to pursue a career in science and research

Work with companies to ensure that financial benefits from CIRM-funded discoveries go to the state's General Fund

The new plan is shaped by two key objectives; developing therapies that will deliver not just health but also economic benefits to the people of California; and the desire to make California's investment sustainable.

"Proposition 71 put California at the center of stem cell research, not just in the US, but also worldwide," says Alan Trounson, Ph.D. President of the stem cell agency. "This Strategic Plan will help ensure we stay there. It will help us create ever-more productive partnerships with researchers and business, help create jobs, and lay the foundation for a whole new industry here in California on a par with Silicon Valley."

This blueprint builds on a number of earlier plans that helped guide the stem cell agency through its formative years. During that initial phase the agency:

- Funded hundreds of studies to advance the basic science behind stem cells to gain a better understand what they do
- Produced 63 projects in 40 different diseases that are close to moving promising therapies into clinical trials
- Committed \$1.3 billion in awards to 59 institutions, all in California
- Attracted \$800 million in additional non-CIRM funds to help build 12 state-of-the-art stem cell research facilities in California

Now, as it moves into a second, more mature phase, the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC) – CIRM's governing board – determined that a new vision was needed for the agency.

"A lot has changed since voters passed Proposition 71 and created the stem cell agency," says Jeff Sheehy, one of the patient advocate members of the ICOC. "We wanted an updated Strategic Plan that would reflect those scientific advances and would reflect the mission of CIRM, namely to accelerate the research and development of therapies to improve the lives of patients."

About CIRM: CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research

institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. A list of grants and loans awarded to date may be seen here: <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/for-researchers/researchfunding>.

Contact:

Kevin McCormack
415-396-9813
kmccormack@cirm.ca.gov

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